

May 3, 2010

Major General Charles F. Bolden, USMC (Ret.)
Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
300 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20546-0002

Dear General Bolden:

Since the beginning of the space transportation system, the Air Force has worked closely with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on the research, planning, and funding of the space shuttle program. It was initiated through a joint effort between the two agencies and the support of both Air Force and NASA were critical to its original approval. Research and engineering funded by the Air Force provided a foundation for the program. The Air Force and Department of Defense designed many of the shuttle missions and they played critical roles in shuttle launch and recovery operations. Many of the astronauts who flew in the shuttles came from the armed services.

For these reasons, we believe that it is fully appropriate and in keeping with preserving the historic link between NASA and the Department of Defense, that following the conclusion of the space shuttle program, a retired space shuttle be placed on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force. We can think of no better way for NASA to honor the contributions of the uniformed members and civilians of our armed services to the space shuttle program.

In his 2009 letter to NASA requesting a retired shuttle, Air Force Secretary Michael B. Donley wrote, "Central to the story is not only the fact many shuttle astronauts have been Airmen, but also the important relationship developed between the USAF and NASA....Placing the space shuttle orbiter on display at the National Museum would give museum visitors an exciting look into this important part of our history."

The National Museum of the United States Air Force in Ohio is the world's oldest and largest museum of military aviation. With 1.3 million visitors annually, the NMUSAF provides the highest quality environmentally controlled conditions, professional curatorial staff, and active museum educational programs. The space shuttle will be fully integrated with the museums exhibits, which include Mercury, Gemini and Apollo capsules and a variety of space vehicles and artifacts.

Maintaining a space shuttle within the Department of Defense for display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force will ensure the shuttle is preserved, exhibited, and promoted for maximum benefit of NASA, the Department of Defense, and the American people.

Sincerely, *& all the best.*
Norbert Ryan

*I thank you for all
you are doing for
our Nation!*